

Reading for Weekday in the Sixth Week of Eastertide

May 12th 2026

First reading

Acts 16:22-34

‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’

In those days: The crowd of Philippians joined in attacking Paul and Silas, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, ‘Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.’ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them, the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds; and he was baptised at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 138(137):1-2a. 2b-3. 3. 7c-8. R3a

*With your right hand you save me, Lord.
or: Alleluia.*

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart;
you have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I praise you.
I bow down towards your holy Temple.
I give thanks to your name
for your merciful love and your faithfulness.
For you have exalted over all
your name and your promise.
On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased the strength of my soul.
With your right hand you save me;
the Lord will accomplish this for me.
O Lord, your merciful love is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands.

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. John 16:7, 13

Alleluia, alleluia.

I will send you the Spirit of truth, says the Lord,
he will guide you into all the truth.

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 16:5-11

‘If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.’

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, “Where are you going?” But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgement, because the ruler of this world is judged.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

We can sympathize with Paul’s indignation at being wrongly thrown in prison, but may wonder if some more patience could have saved him a lot of trouble! Certainly he took the side of the unfortunate girl being exploited for profit by her boss, but as a result he and Silas were arrested, flogged and thrown in prison. Such a flogging of a Roman citizen was against the law, so Paul later demanded and received a public apology from the magistrates.

In gaol during the night, as Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, an earthquake broke down the prison gates. While they could have escaped, they remained where they were. The gaoler woke up, saw his prison gates open and drew a sword to kill himself, afraid of the consequences. Paul calmed him down and after a quick instruction about Jesus, baptized the gaoler and his entire household. Then the gaoler held a feast for the missionaries. What a roller-coaster of experiences.

Like Paul and Barnabas, the modern Christian often stands in need of spiritual help, from the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus. Crises like those met by Paul are not just a test of our personal character but can be the occasion to renew our trust in the love of the Holy Spirit. The love of Jesus surpasses our predictions and fears. He is no less able now than then to bring things to a happy outcome. Even out of the most threatening vortex, good can emerge and, as Julian of Norwich serenely believed, “All manner of things will be well!”